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10 NOV 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Conversation with []
of the EMD

1. In a private conversation 9 November 1966 [] conveyed to me a message from Gehlen. The thrust of the message was that Gehlen wanted to assure the Director that his postponement of his visit on this occasion was solely due to the political crisis in Germany. Gehlen said that he was aware that his failure to be responsive to a series of invitations from various Agency officers over the past few years had been read within CIA as having political connotations. Also, Gehlen was aware that he had been labelled a "Gaullist" by individuals who were not directly and fully aware of his political views. Gehlen told [] that he wanted us to know that his basic convictions concerning the importance of a politically unified Western Europe within an integrated Atlantic Community remained unchanged. He thought that much that De Gaulle had attempted to do was entirely consistent with this concept; not all that De Gaulle had said and done was, however, acceptable to Gehlen.

2. I told [] that many of us, specifically including myself, had attributed--accurately I thought-- political considerations to Gehlen's reluctance to visit the US in recent years; however, in the instant case I thought that everyone--and most certainly the Director--harbored no doubts at all about the necessity for Gehlen's presence in Germany in these critical days.

3. [] said that Gehlen anticipated that things would shake down by early in 1967; he thought that February might be a suitable time for rescheduling the visit if this proved to be convenient to the Director. (Comment: It was not my impression that this was an official proposal requiring a response from us at this time.)

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4. After conversing on other matters, I returned to the subject of the postponed visit to observe that there had been one curious aspect of the exchange which had mystified Gehlen. I said that Gehlen had neither instructed nor authorized him to bring up this point; therefore it was not, he emphasized, part of Gehlen's message. Gehlen had, however, asked I for judgment on the significance of the use of the official USG-Bonn channel to extend and obtain approval of the visit. Gehlen had been advised that the first word of the Director's invitation came from the American Ambassador in Bonn to Westrick in the Chancellor's office.

5. I laughed and brushed this lightly aside as of no significance. I said that I did, by coincidence, know something of the circumstances which had accidentally led to some activity in official channels concerning the Director's notation. It had been a pure accident and no significance at all should be attached to it. I said that he had assumed this and had told Gehlen that in his five years in Washington he had never gotten the impression that the Director consulted with the Secretary of State on top level CIA liaison contacts.

/s/ James H. Critchfield

JAMES H. CRITCHFIELD
Chief, Near East and
South Asia Division

cc: DDCI
DDP
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